

Athenian News :

O R,

Dunton's Oracle.

From Tuesday April the 11th, to Saturday April the 15th, 1710.

The Sibil-Post, or Ideal Kingdom, being a new and mysterious Discovery made for the Use of the Ladies; to be continu'd in Dunton's Oracle, 'till all the Colonies are planted.

Repairing again to the delicious Walk, full of the Impressions the Sibil's Relation of *curious Fancy* had fix'd in my Mind, I found her late upon a Bank with her Book; she prevented my Application to her, and calling to me said, *I am now as earnest as you to finish my Description of all the Colonies, that I may come to Things of more Moment; therefore to begin another, you must know the ill Success the Tyrant found, by his Mistake, in the Choice of a Governour, could not hinder him from passing by noble Fancy, and planting a Colony first in new Fancy, a very healthful, mild Air, sweet and pleasant, his chief Care is to provide a Governour of approv'd Loyalty, a great Politician, that 'till now had been one of his close Council, which he had not quitted, but for this great Service, he requested he might have Laws made to curb and awe the People. He knew Rules were not of Force sufficient, and he should find the Way to change Laws without the Help of Reason, his profess'd Enemy. He humbly advis'd all the Laws might be first publish'd, so that none might come but such as were ready and willing to obey 'em: Then was declar'd his Majesty's Edict, commanding and requiring all his loving Subjects, on Pain of incurring his high Displeasure, that no Honour and Respect should be paid to any Person whatsoever, but for their Riches; that no Person, directly or indirectly, should dare to put any one in Mind of Death; that no Honours, Offices, or Places of Trust, be confer'd on those that best deserve 'em, but sold to the rich, who gives most for 'em.*

These Laws were held sufficient, as the Governour was able to explain and enlarge 'em, and all Persons who were willing to live under 'em, invited to come. A great Concourse of People immediately arriv'd there; the rich of all Sorts, old and young, some that were advis'd by their Physicians to that Air, for the Recovery of their Healths, (whom Sickness and Physick had much impoverish'd) came, notwithstanding the Contempt the Laws put upon 'em, which they could easily submit to,

(so seldom they were seen abroad) for that huge Advantage towards their Recovery, of never being put in Mind of Death. Some Men there were whose Parents had never been at any Expence for their Education, only to leave 'em rich at their Deaths, came thither, the properest Place to gain Respect in, meerly for their Riches; or if they pleas'd, might purchase Places of Honour and Authority, by bidding freely. Thither also came the rich Citizens with their Wives and Families, who had left Trading, highly pleas'd with the Respect those Laws ensur'd 'em: There follow'd 'em all Traders necessary to furnish out good eating and drinking; that now the Security of enjoying their Riches without any Thoughts of Death, made 'em perfectly happy. Some among the rich, that were of Quality, were not so well satisfy'd, finding they could not distinguish themselves but by a *numerous Retinue*, which so exhausted their Riches they were forc'd to have Recourse to some Arts of several Kinds, to keep up the Credit of Riches, which was all that gave 'em any Pretence to be respected: It seem'd therefore absolutely necessary to make the greatest Shew they possibly cou'd; and in Order to it, they stop'd all Payments to intimate Friends, and old Servants, and turn'd all the Splendour of their Riches outwards, appearing at Churches, and all publick Places, dress'd up in Jewels, some right and others false, shelter'd under the Credit of right, and by giving magnificently in all Occasions of publick Charity, especially in the Case of Subscriptions, which gain'd 'em much Respect with the Collectors of those publick Charities, who had no small Share in it themselves: But to the Citizens Wives this was no small Mortification, to find they were not able to vie with Quality in these Particulars; for tho' their Husbands allow'd 'em rich Cloaths, Plate, and fine Furniture, they could not be brought to let so much Money lie dead in Jewels, their Value being for the most Part, changeable and uncertain, and to be excessive liberal in publick Charity they knew too well, by their own Experience, how that went; they question'd not to find surer Ways for their Wives to exercise their Charity, and with as much publick Applause, which soon satisfy'd 'em for this Trouble; but the Governour met with one much more considerable, in the disposing Honours, Offices, and Places of Trust, for the Words of the Edict order'd 'em for those that gave most for 'em, which were the Sons of those Misers who left 'em so rich.

* But there were others, that, to obtain Riches, had marry'd Women they despis'd in all Respects besides that;

that; which tho' they could not pretend to out-bid 'em, had in Effect given more. They being Men of Experience, knew the Way of presenting the Governour, who with all his Politicks could not certainly determine whether he were not oblig'd by the Edict to spoil the Fancy. He knew nothing could secure him in that Point but Secrecy, but knew as well how little it could be depended upon in marry'd Men: He concluded at last upon changing the Law, as the best Expedient, and thereupon humbly address'd his Majesty to permit him the Disposal of all *Honours, Offices, and Places of Trust*, after his own Fancy, which he conceives will be most for his Majesty's Honour. This was immediately granted, but another Difficulty was found in the second Law, strictly requiring, *that neither directly, nor indirectly, any Person should be put in Mind of Death*. When all the ancient and sickly Persons wherever they appear'd, their very Looks gave Warning of Death, tho' 'twas very rarely found that any one apply'd it to themselves; but yet the very Possibility of dying, in the most transient Thought, is enough to spoil Fancy; which the Governour apprehending might prove a considerable Hinderance to the flourishing of *new Fancy*, thought it his Duty to acquaint his Majesty with this Danger, which was not much regarded by that *great Monarch*: Yet, for the Ease and Satisfaction of the Governour, he was pleas'd to issue out his Proclamation, *that no aged Person in Wisdom, out of Pretence of Gravity, presume to distinguish themselves from the younger Sort by their Dress or Carriage, but use all Arts possible to hide Old Age, and then to frequent all Places of Pleasure and Diversion, dress'd up in all the finest gay Cloaths, and in the newest Fashion, and never presume to wear Spectacles, upon any Occasion, on Pain of his Majesty's high Displeasure*: But some Indulgence was granted to sick Persons that kept their Chambers, provided they dress'd as fine as that Condition would allow, and fail'd not to send Complements to all their Friends and Acquaintance, engaging them to make 'em many Visits.

The publishing this Proclamation spread an universal Joy over the Face of the whole Colony, notwithstanding People dy'd before they thought on't. This struck the Governour with such a Consternation, it put him past all Manner of Excuse: At last he found out an Expedient. That it might not be in the Power of Death to spoil the Fancy, he first encourag'd all Men of Art and Fancy in contriving fine Funerals, to come to the Colony, and then gave Leave, by an Order obtain'd from the *great Monarch*, for all Persons to chuse all the Ceremonies of their Funerals. The Governour soon found the good Effects of this Order, by the great Variety of new Fancies it produc'd, and quite extinguisht the Terror of Death. Some there were who had destroy'd their Health by a dearly beloved Fancy of living upon Drams and Cordials: These Persons believ'd they shou'd look charmingly in their Coffins if they were but well dress'd; which to secure, they took Care to chuse the Dress that best became 'em, which they laid by against a sudden Occasion. Others there were who (finding Dust and stinking Smells had impair'd their Healths, and rais'd the Vapours) conceiv'd a mortal Aversion against the Thought of lying in Graves amongst the Dead, and therefore resolv'd to be carry'd with some *new fancy'd Pomp*, and be bury'd in the Sea; and many that were fond of lying by their near Relations, in Vaults of their Families, were carry'd with great Pomp,

Ceremony, and much Expence, into far Countries. Great Variety of Ways the Fancies were exercis'd of those that were threaten'd with Death, which dissipated all their Fears. Such *fine Monuments, rich Coffins, and glorious Poms*, were prepar'd, that many who found their Distempers tedious and languishing, wish'd for Death, to consummate the Pleasures of their Life by a glorious Sepulchre in *new Fancy*.

The Casuistical-Post, or Athenian Mercury.

Quest. Why did Christ sit while he preach'd unto the Multitude?

Ansiv. First, Some say, that he might the better hide and conceal his Deity; he doth not stand and preach, but sits, because they were not able to take up, comprehend, or understand, what he should teach them in Power, as God.

Secondly, Some say Christ sat for the Dignity of the Preacher; they that were taught were but Men, but he which taught them was more, he was God and Man, and therefore he sits when he preacheth unto them.

Thirdly, The true Reason thereof was this, because it was the Manner and Custom to preach sitting; thus elsewhere Christ taught the People sitting. *Mat. 13. 1, 2. Mark 4. 1. Luk. 5. 3. Joh. 8. 2.* and most plainly, *Luk. 4. 20.* he reads a Chapter, and then *sits down and preacheth*. So *Mat. 26. 55.* Thus the Jews were accusom'd to sit and teach, whence they were said to sit in *Moses Seat*: And after Christ, the Apostles practis'd this same Custom, sitting and preaching.

Q. What were those Things in Particular that Adam had, and did not lose the Possession of, before he return'd to the Dust?

A. I answer, He lost not his Flesh and Bones, together with his Breath, but kept the Possession of them 930 Years, *Gen. 5. 5.* neither was there any thing diminish'd of his Form or Fashion, but he continu'd with every Limb and Joint as God had orderly plac'd them; so he remain'd the very same Man for Matter and Form; neither do I read in Scripture, that he parted with any Lineament that was any ways useful, as any external Part of him, no, nor the Use of any thing that was in him, or of him, to his Being: He had Eyes to see, or else he cou'd not have seen to have made Cloaths for himself, *Gen. 3. 7.* Again, He had the Use of hearing, *v. 10.* Again, He lost not the Use of his Tongue, for he spake to God, *v. 12.* neither any of his Senses, for he cou'd tast of the Labours of his Hand, and that he had Strength to labour will not be deny'd, and that he retain'd his Knowledge is very plain, *v. 22.* God speaks rather of his encreasing of Knowledge, than his decaying. Again, It cannot be imagin'd that God had so done with Adam, and cast him off, that he had no other Employment for him, but rather that God had some great Work for him to do; and I make no Question, but God had so order'd the Employments that he had for Adam, some of them to be more spiritual than ever Adam had to do before the Fall; and then that God shou'd utterly disable him for the Performance thereof, will never be made good by any Man under Heaven; so that a Man that knoweth any Wisdom of God, shall not have any just

just Occasion to think so of him; for if in that Service of God which *Adam* had to do, he was compleatly furnish'd by God, why should I judge that he would employ him in a harder Service, and not afford him a suitable Accommodation, seeing God is as willing that his Commands should be obey'd after the Fall as he was willing before the Fall? for I judge, the Work that God set *Adam* about before the Fall, *Adam* had an Ability to do after the Fall. If God had given him a Command to have return'd into the Garden again, as a Power or Authority, it is more than probable he would have obey'd him; for God knew well enough that *Adam* had not lost his Understanding, neither his Memory; for he could tell the Use of the Tree, and where it stood, that would have cur'd him of that deadly Wound, otherwise God would not have made his strong Provision as a Prevention of him: But if *Adam* had been so disabl'd, then certainly there would not have been all that Stir; so that *Adam* lost no Part of the Materials which he had to his Being, neither any Property essentially belonging thereto, during the Time of his Life, but was a compleat Man, for Matter and Form, 'till Death came.

I confess that *Adam* lost all that God gave him, even every Part of these forenam'd Things, so that he had forfeited his Body and Limbs, I mean Matter and Form, and that God would in Time bereave him of all, and so utterly disable him from making Use of any one of them; but that he did so at the very Instant of Time of his Rebellion, I deny, or any Time before 930 Years were expir'd.

Further, I confess that *Adam* lost that pleasant Place of Accommodation which was so sweetly deck'd, for the well-being of all those forenam'd Properties, at the very Time he was turn'd out of the Garden, yet God let him keep his Being, as he was a Man, until Death came so to him, and ransack'd him, that he had not the Use of any of them, but turn'd to Dust.

Q. Whether Virtue in Example does not much more charmingly endear it self, than the most rhetorical Description of it? Or, in plainer Words, why are Men led more by Example than Precept?

A. Virtue and Goodness are so becoming and fashionable, especially when worn by great Men, that we are very ready to conform our selves to them; they lend Piety some Ornaments and Lustre, that other Men have an Ambition and Curiosity to wear and mimic; and truly, Habits of Virtue, like fine Cloaths upon a right and well shap'd Body, sit gracefully upon an erect and goodly Mind, and are very decent and becoming: And such great Examples and shining Lights carry some Authority and Power to direct our Paths, which Authority we are inclin'd to follow, and to pay a natural Submission to; and the Rhetorick and Eloquence of their Actions, persuade more forcibly than that of their Words and Discourses; either because it discovers some new Beauty in Virtue, or teaches the Practice more plainly, or that it smooths and sweetens the Difficulties of it; whether or no these altogether, or any of them, is the Cause of the great Power and Efficacy of Examples, this is certain, That Learning by Examples is most compendious and lively, and that Instruction by Rule and Discourses, is tedious and slow: He that exhorts to, and displays Virtue in its due Colours, must lay out a great deal of Time and Discourse in describing its Nature and Beauty, to inspire the Practice of it; but if he lays this plain to the

Eye, if he practises himself what he taught before, he must smooth the Way, and clear his Doctrine wonderfully, and he will perform incomparably more by his Example, than by all his Reasoning.

A Man may understand the Art of Painting much easier and better, if he see the Artist handle his Pencil, and lay his Colours, and draw the Lines, than if he had taken Pains to instruct him in the Rules, and to discover the Secrets of it; we have all that Inclination to Imitation and Mimickry, and Examples move and insinuate themselves with such secret Charms and Attractions, that we find by Experience, that we cannot well resist the Power and Virtue of them, and we begin to act the same Things by pure Habit and Familiarity, without Reflection or Thought; and living Examples have a Life, or Spirit, or whatever you call it, which we desire to rival and come up to, and which is beyond the Art of Rhetorick, or Painter, to set forth in due and lively Colours: And besides, the dullest Spectator has the Advantage to understand the broad Language of Actions and Examples, when he may be at a Loss to trace and discern the Thread of a fine and goodly Discourse; and when he sees the Actions of Men answer and keep close to the Warmth of their Words and Language, then is he easily induc'd to believe their Conviction and Sincerity, and the Persuasion they have of the Truth of what they offer; and truly, if we take the Picture from the Original, when we copy all the living Charms and Loveliness from living Examples, that represent the Beauties of Virtue in most decent and graceful Motion and Carriage, they animate it with that Spirit and Warmth that makes it look natural, then Virtue walks in our own Dress, and so lays a more lively and deeper Impression upon us, and recommends it self in its most endearing Comeliness, and agreeable Gestures; but Virtue drawn from Precepts and Discourses is a Transcript and Copy, the Statue and Picture of a living Example, and is languid for want of that Air, and Life, and Motion, that inspirits the former; and in a Word, Virtue in Example does much more charmingly endear it self, than the most rhetorical Descriptions of it, and is as much above the most lively Discourse and finish'd Panegyrick upon it, as the Creator is above the Painter, or Nature and the Original above Art and the Picture: Since therefore Examples have all this Power and Efficacy, and that we have generally a secret Itch and Desire to ape Grandeur, when we cannot attain to it, how mighty advantageous and necessary is it that Persons of Rank, and Quality, and Fortune, should be shining Examples, a Spectacle set on high, that People may copy after these Originals, that such Patterns should be set in a true Light, that others may the more advantageously take and draw from them all the Beauties and Features of Virtue and Goodness.

Q. What is that Distortion of the Countenance which we call Laughter? and what is the Passion opposite hereunto, call'd Weeping?

A. There is a Passion that hath no Name, but the Sign of it is that Distortion of the Countenance which we call *Laughter*, which is always *Joy*; but what *Joy*, what we think, and wherein we triumph when we laugh, is not hitherto declar'd by any. That it consisteth in *Wit*, or, as they call it, in the *Jest*, Experience confuteth; for Men laugh at Mischances and Indecencies, wherein there lieth no *Wit* nor *Jest* at all. And forasmuch as the same Thing is no more ridiculous when it groweth

groweth stale or usual, whatsoever it be that moveth Laughter, it must be new and unexpected. Men laugh often (especially such as are greedy of Applause from every thing they do well) at their own Actions perform'd never so little beyond their own Expectations; as also at their own Jest: And in this Case it is manifest, that the Passion of Laughter proceedeth from a sudden Conception of some Ability in himself that laugheth. Also Men laugh at the Infirmities of others, by Comparison wherewith their own Abilities are set off and illustrated. Also Men laugh at Jest, the Wit whereof always consisteth in the elegant discovering and conveying to our Minds some Absurdity of another: And in this Case also the Passion of Laughter proceedeth from the sudden Imagination of our own Odds and Eminency; for what is else the recommending of our selves to our own good Opinion, by Comparison with another Man's Infirmary or Absurdity? For when a Jest is broken upon our selves, or Friends, of whose Dishonour we participate, we never laugh thereat. I may therefore conclude, that the Passion of Laughter is nothing else but sudden Glory, arising from some sudden Conception of some Eminency in our selves, by Comparison with the Infirmary of others, or with our own formerly; for Men laugh at the Follies of themselves past, when they come suddenly to Remembrance, except they bring with them any present Dishonour. It is no Wonder therefore that Men take it heinously to be laugh'd at or derided, that is, triumph'd over. Laughing without Offence, must be at Absurdities and Infirmities abstracted from Persons, and when all the Company may laugh together; for, laughing to one's self putteth all the rest into Jealousy, and Examination of themselves. Besides, it is Vain-glory, and an Argument of little Worth, to think the Infirmary of another sufficient Matter for his Triumph.

The Passion opposite hereunto, (whose Signs are another Distortion of the Face with Tears) call'd *Weeping*, is the sudden falling out with our selves, or sudden Conception of Defect; and therefore Children weep often; for seeing they think every thing ought to be given them which they desire, of Necessity every Repulse must be a Check of their Expectation, and puts them in Mind of their too much Weakness to make themselves Masters of all they look for. For the same Cause Women are more apt to weep than Men, as being not only more accustomed to have their Wills, but also to measure their Powers by the Power and Love of others that protect them. Men are apt to weep that prosecute Revenge, when the Revenge is suddenly stop'd, or frustrated by the Repentance of their Adversary; and such are the Tears of Reconciliation. Also revengeful Men are subject to this Passion upon the beholding those Men they pity, and suddenly remember they cannot help. Other weeping in Men proceedeth for the most Part, from the same Cause it proceedeth from in Women and Children.

Q. Wherein does Remembrance consist?

A. By the Senses, which are number'd according to the Organs to be Five; we take Notice of the Objects without us, and that Notice is our Conception thereof: But we take Notice also some Way or other of our Conceptions; for when the Conception of the same Thing cometh again, we take Notice that it is again; that is to say, that we have had

the same Conception before; which is as much as to imagine a Thing past, which is impossible to the Sense, which is only of Things present. This therefore may be accounted a Sixth Sense, but internal, (not external, as the rest) and is commonly call'd *Remembrance*.

For the Manner by which we take Notice of a Conception past, we are to remember, that in the Definition of *Imagination*, it is said to be a Conception by little and little decaying, or growing more obscure. An obscure Conception is that which representeth the whole Object together, but none of the smaller Parts by themselves; and as more, or fewer Parts be represented, so is the Conception or Representation said to be more or less clear. Seeing then the Conception, which when it was first produc'd by Sense, was clear, and represented the Parts of the Object distinctly, and when it cometh again is obscure, we find missing somewhat that we expected; by which we judge it pass'd and decay'd. For Example; *A Man that is present in a foreign City, seeth not only whole Streets, but can also distinguish particular Houses, and Parts of Houses, but departed thence, he cannot distinguish them so particularly in his Mind as he did, some House or Turning escaping him; yet is this to remember, when afterwards there escapeth him more Particulars; this is also to remember, but not so well. In Process of Time, the Image of the City returneth but as a Mass of Building only, which is almost to have forgotten it. Seeing then Remembrance is more or less, as we find more or less Obscurity, why may not we well think Remembrance to be nothing else but the missing of Parts, which every Man expecteth should succeed after they have a Conception of the whole? To see at a great Distance of Place, and to remember at great Distance of Time, is to have like Conceptions of the Thing; for there wanteth Distinction of Parts in both; the one Conception being weak by Operation at Distance, the other by Decay.*

Q. What is the Passion that is call'd Shame?

A. It hapneth sometimes, that he that hath a good Opinion of himself, and upon good Ground, may nevertheless, by Reason of the Forwardness which that Passion begetteth, discover in himself some Defect or Infirmary, the Remembrance whereof dejecteth him; and this Passion is call'd *Shame*, by which being cool'd and check'd in his Forwardness, he is more wary for the Time to come. This Passion, as it is a Sign of Infirmary, which is Dishonour, so also it is a Sign of Knowledge, which is Honour. The Sign of it is blushing, which appeareth less in Men conscious of their own Defect, because they less betray the Infirmities they acknowledge.

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